

Establishing Winter Water for Waterfowl

Purpose

The purpose of this practice is to provide shallow water areas for migrating waterfowl by catching rainfall and holding it in areas that will provide food and loafing areas. The earlier in fall water can be made available to migratory birds, the better the opportunity to attract early migrants. The water control structure should be closed to the required height. To prevent water loss, boards in flash board risers should be secured with wooden wedges. Screw type gates should be lubricated and checked for obstructions that may prevent complete closure. In crop field situations, it is best to leave behind as much waste grain as possible by leaving the field unplowed. Fields planted to grains for waterfowl food plots or those managed for moist soil plants should be left undisturbed. The practice is considered established when 8" or more of water has been pumped onto planned area before the required date. This practice will provide increased water quality and quantity benefits in addition to providing valuable wildlife habitat.

General Requirements

- Impoundments must have dikes and a water control structure to facilitate rainfall collection and subsequent draining for planting.
- **Boards must be placed no later than November 1 and not removed before February 15 for catching rainfall.**
- Current migratory game bird hunting regulations allow hunting of waterfowl over standing crops, flooded standing crops, and harvested croplands. These crops may not be manipulated except by normal agricultural practices used to produce and harvest the crop. Grain inadvertently scattered by entering and leaving the field, placing decoys, or retrieving birds is not considered baiting. Japanese millet can readily reseed in subsequent years and can be manipulated when naturally reseeded, but not during the establishment year.
Check with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks for current hunting and baiting regulations.

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